

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 L-03 H-02 SY-05 AID-05

PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /070 W

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R 112148Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 615

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FOR SCS AND ARA/CEN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, HO (CYPHER, MICHAEL J)

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 2991, 2961, 2921

1. DCM AND CONSOFF MET THIS MORNING WITH FR. EMILIO COOK, USC PRIEST AND COWORKER OF FR. CYPHER, WHO JUST RETURNED FROM U.S. WHERE HE WAS VISITING WHEN VIOLENT EVENTS IN OLANCHO OCCURRED. COOK SAID HE HAD NO PROBLEM RETURNING, WHICH WILL PERHAPS QUIET FEAR THAT FOREIGN RELIGIOUS WORKERS LEAVING OR PRESENTLY OUT OF HONDURAS WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO RETURN.

2. COOK COMMENTED THAT MEETING OF PRIESTS YESTERDAY HAD BEEN TOLD OF THREE POSSIBLE SCENARIOS; THAT CYPHER HAD BEEN MURDERED WHILE IN CUSTODY OF MILITARY AUTHORITIES, THAT HE HAD BEEN RELEASED FROM CUSTODY AND SUBSEQUENTLY KILLED BY LANDOWNERS, THAT HE HAD BEEN RELEASED AND FLED NORTH IN ATTEMPT REACH COAST. LATTER APPARENTLY BASED ON RUMOR OF A "WOUNDED GRINGO" BEING SEEN NEAR LA GUATA, OLANCHO SEVERAL DAYS AFTER DISAPPEARANCE. COOK HAS NOT FULLY ABANDONED HOPE CYPHER STILL ALIVE, BUT SAID CHURCH AUTHORITIES NEARLY CERTAIN HE DEAD. HE UNDERSTANDS CYPHER'S ORDER WILL INFORM

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PARENTS HE BELIEVED DEAD, BUT HE PLANS CALL THEM PERSONALLY

TODAY.

3. COOK HOPES RETURN HIS PARISH GUALACO, OLANCHO, PERHAPS IN A WEEK ACCOMPANIED BY SEVERAL USC LAY TEACHERS FOR HIGH SCHOOL THERE. HE BELIEVES OLANCHO BISHOP USC NICHOLAS D'ANTONIO WILL NOT RETURN TO HONDURAS FOR AT LEAST A MONTH AND THAT CHURCH MAY NOT ALLOW HIM RETURN OLANCHO IN BELIEF LANDOWNERS WOULD KILL HIM.

4. CONSOFF ALSO SPOKE AGAIN THIS MORNING WITH FR. RALPH VALA OF FR. CYPHER'S ORDER IN WISCONSIN, EXPLAINING THERE STILL NO OFFICIAL NEWS AND BRINGING HIM UP TO DATE ON FORMATION OF MILITARY INVESTIGATING COMMISSION AND EMBASSY'S DEMARCHE YESTERDAY. VALA SAID HE ALSO SPOKE TODAY WITH ARA/CEN WACKERBARTH.

5. SECRETARY TO ARCHBISHOP INFORMED CONSOFF THIS MORNING PUBLICATION OF REPORT OF JOINT COMMISSION HAS BEEN DELAYED ANOTHER 24 HOURS AT REQUEST OF MILITARY MEMBER, PURPORTEDLY FOR FURTHER STUDY BY CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR. CHURCH WILL ISSUE A MANIFESTO LATER TODAY STATING PRIESTS ARE BELIEVED DEAD. MASSES FOR THEM ARE TO BE SAID IN ALL CATHOLIC CHURCHES SUNDAY, JULY 13. AFTER LONG MEETING WEDNESDAY NIGHT WITH MELGAR AND HIS NAMING OF MILITARY COMMISSION, HIERARCHY SATISFIED GOVERNMENT IS REACTING APPROPRIATELY AND RESPONSIBLY, ACCORDING TO ARCHBISHIP'S SECRETARY.

SANCHEZ

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